
PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES **ESSA** ENDANGERED SPECIES SCIENTIFIC AUTHORITY
EIGHTEENTH & C STREETS, N W □ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

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ESSA PROPOSES TO APPROVE LIMITED
EXPORT OF ALLIGATORS AND GINSENG

Limited export of wild American ginseng and American alligators would be permitted under proposals published by the Endangered Species Scientific Authority (ESSA) in the Thursday, May 31, 1979, and Friday, June 1, 1979, Federal Register.

ESSA, the scientific authority for the United States under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), has proposed to determine that export of American ginseng (Panax quinquefolius) harvested in 1979 in Kentucky and Wisconsin will not be detrimental to its continued survival in the wild. A 60-day comment period on the proposal will be allowed, during which ESSA expects to receive sufficient data on state harvest controls and population status in the wild to allow export of ginseng from other states in addition to Kentucky and Wisconsin. Last year ESSA approved ginseng export from 17 states.

ESSA also proposed to approve conditionally the export of American alligators (Alligator mississippiensis) legally killed in Louisiana and Florida on or after June 28, 1979, the date on which the species will be officially reclassified from CITES Appendix I, which prohibits commercial international trade, to Appendix II, which allows international trade under permits issued by management authorities. In the U.S., export permits may be issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if it is satisfied that specimens were not taken in violation of federal and state law and if the ESSA advises in its final rulemaking of August 10, 1979, that export will not be detrimental to the survival of the species.

The decision to reclassify the alligator was made in March at a meeting of the 51 nations which have ratified CITES. The question of export of hides taken prior to that date awaits a determination by the Fish and Wildlife Service on the legality of exporting hides taken while the species was on Appendix I.

ESSA has proposed three conditions on export of American alligators which are necessary to protect other crocodilian species in the world. Because crocodilian species are very difficult to distinguish from each

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other, endangered "look-alike" species could enter world trade as American alligators unless positive identification can be made of authentic American alligator and its parts and products.

The three conditions designed to assure that trade in American alligators will not harm other crocodilians are as follows: (1) Foreign buyers, tanners, and fabricators must be subject to U.S. licensing requirements similar to those currently in force within the United States; (2) Exports must be allowed only to licensed buyers, tanners, or fabricators located in countries which have ratified CITES and which have not taken reservations against CITES controls on trade in endangered species of crocodilians; and (3) Prior to export, all hides must be indelibly marked over their entire reverse surface with identifying symbols.

France, Italy, Spain, and Japan are major crocodilian markets that would not qualify for exports under this proposal. However, compliance with the conditions would permit access to American alligator hides to those countries subscribing to the standard of international management of endangered species embodied in the CITES.

Comments on the proposed rulemaking should be addressed to the Executive Secretary, Endangered Species Scientific Authority, 18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240.

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